DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 446 120 TM 031 881

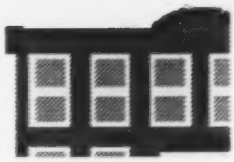
TITLE	Understanding Your School Report Card, 2000. Guide to Secondary School Examinations.
INSTITUTION	New York State Education Dept., Albany. Information, Reporting, and Technology Services.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	6p.
AVAILABLE FROM	New York State Education Department, Information, Reporting, & Technology Services, Rm. 863 EBA, Albany, NY 12234. For full text: http://www.emsc.nysed.gov.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Graduation Requirements; *High School Students; High Schools; Instructional Effectiveness; *Report Cards; *Secondary Education; State Programs; *Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*New York

ABSTRACT

The New York State School Report Card is an important part of the state's efforts to raise learning standards for all students. This guide provides an overview of the changes for the year 2000, answers to frequently asked questions, and descriptions of the state's testing program and other performance measures. This document focuses on questions and answers about the secondary school examinations, including a review of New York's requirements for a high school diploma. Beginning with students who enter ninth grade in 2001, all students will be required to pass at least 5 Regents examinations and earn at least 22 units of credit. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 446 120



UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCHOOL REPORT CARD 2000

Guide to Secondary School Examinations

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Martha Musser

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TM031881

For information contact

The New York State Education Department

Information, Reporting & Technology Services

Room 863 EBA

Albany, N.Y. 12234

(518) 474-7965

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

The ***New York State School Report Card*** is an important part of the Board of Regents effort to raise learning standards for all students. It is designed to provide information to the public on student performance and other measures of school and district performance. This year's report card has been changed to focus on measures of student progress on the new standards. This guide provides an overview of the changes, answers to frequently asked questions, and descriptions of the State testing program and other performance measures. We hope you will use the school report card to improve performance at your school.

This year's school report card is composed of complementary parts:

- *An Overview of Academic Performance*, and
- *A Comprehensive Information Report.*

The *Overview* includes results on the new grades 4 and 8 assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; performance of students who entered ninth grade in the 1996-97 school year on Regents English and mathematics examinations; and school performance on accountability measures. School and district statistics are provided in separate reports. The report compares the school's results with those of schools that are similar, and the companion school district report compares school district with statewide results.

The *Comprehensive Information Report (CIR)* presents three years of results on all other State assessments, specifically, Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) grade 5 writing, Program Evaluation Tests, all Regents examinations, Second Language Proficiency Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Occupational Education Proficiency Examinations. The CIR provides information on high school completers, and attendance, suspension and dropout rates.

Questions & Answers

Q. ***What are the learning standards?***

A. The Board of Regents has established learning standards in seven curriculum areas. They describe broad expectations of what students should know, understand and be able to do as they progress through grades K-12 in New York State schools.

Q . ***What is the relationship between the school report card and the learning standards?***

A. Both are part of the statewide strategy for raising the level of student achievement. The strategy includes:

- **establishing standards in seven curriculum areas;**
- **changing the testing program to reflect the higher standards;**
- **raising high school graduation requirements;**
- **building the capacity of schools to help students achieve the standards;**
- **ensuring high standards and support for teachers and administrators;**
- **building partnerships to improve student achievement; and**
- **increasing accountability through public reporting of student performance.**

Q. ***How will school report cards help parents ensure their schools are meeting or exceeding the State standards?***

A. The school report card shows how well students are performing on the new State tests and the higher graduation requirements. Knowledge gained from the school report card on a school's strengths and weaknesses can be used to plan programs and curriculum and to allocate resources.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When comparing schools, remember that small differences among schools are meaningless and the pattern of differences among schools may change from year to year by chance.

Q. ***What information is reported on school accountability?***

A. The status of schools in meeting the school accountability performance criteria for fourth, eighth, and eleventh grades is reported. All students continuously enrolled at the school are included in these measures.

Q. ***What is a Local Assistance Plan?***

A. A district is required to prepare a local assistance plan (LAP) for schools that fall below 90 percent on any school accountability criterion. The plan must include activities to improve performance of all students and to enable the school to meet or exceed accountability criteria.

Q. ***What are the requirements for a high school diploma?***

A. To have earned a local diploma in the 1998-99 school year, a student must have completed 18 1/2 units of study. These units must include four units in English, four units in social studies, two units in science, two units in mathematics, one unit in art and/or music, and one-half unit in health education, as well as prescribed course sequences. No Regents examinations were required for a local diploma. To have earned a Regents diploma, a student generally must have completed three units in a language other than English and passed a minimum of eight Regents examinations.

Q. Have the graduation requirements been revised?

A. The Board of Regents has established more rigorous graduation requirements. Beginning with students who enter ninth grade in 2001, all

students will be required to pass at least five Regents examinations and earn at least 22 units of credit, including four units in English, four in social studies, three in mathematics, three in science, one in the arts, one in a language other than English, one-half in health, and two in physical education. Higher requirements have been established for an advanced designation on the Regents diploma.

These graduation requirements are being phased in, beginning with students who first entered grade 9 in 1996-97. General education students in this class are required to earn a 65 (55 at local discretion) or higher on the Regents English examination to earn a local diploma. General education students who first entered grade 9 in 1997-98 are required to earn a 65 (55 at local discretion) or higher on a Regents examination in mathematics. Additional Regents examination requirements will be implemented with each new ninth grade class.

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the standards, the Board of Regents established safety net provisions, including a five-year phase-in of the requirement that students pass five Regents exams; the option for districts to award local diplomas to students scoring 55-64 on required Regents exams; and allowing students with disabilities who fail a Regents exam to demonstrate competency using the Regents competency test in that subject area. These provisions start with students who first entered grade 9 in 1996-97 and end with students who first enter grade 9 in 2001-02.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Q. ***How is the performance of students with disabilities reported?***

A. School performance on Regents examinations, on demonstrating competency for graduation, and earning high school diplomas includes results for general education students and students with disabilities. Results for students with disabilities on these measures are also displayed separately. Students with disabilities may use modified testing procedures specified in their individualized education program, so caution should be used when comparing results among schools.

Q. ***How is the performance of English Language Learners (ELL), formerly referred to as limited English proficient (LEP) students, assessed and reported?***

A. Students who entered grade 9 prior to the 1996-97 school year whose native language is not English may demonstrate competency for graduation through alternative procedures. In the areas of reading and writing, the students must 1) demonstrate reading comprehension and writing skills in their native language at a level comparable to the requirements of the competency tests in reading and writing, and 2) demonstrate English language proficiency on a Department-approved examination designed to measure English as a second language. All ELLs may demonstrate competency in mathematics, science, and social studies by passing an alternative-language edition of each required Regents competency tests.

The Regents examination in sequential mathematics course I is now available in five alternative-language editions. Alternative-language editions of all required Regents examinations except English will become available as the new graduation requirements are implemented. All general education students, including ELLs, who first entered grade 9 in 1996-97, will be required to pass the Regents English examination.

Q. ***How can parents help their children meet higher standards?***

A. Parents can help children by knowing the school's expectations of students and by monitoring children's learning and homework.

Q. ***Why do some schools have variances from the State testing requirements?***

A. Variances were granted to selected schools to give Department-approved alternative examinations. Schools do not report student results on these alternative examinations to the Department. In these cases, the school report card displays an asterisk in place of examination results.

Q. ***What are similar schools?***

A. To help parents and community members determine how their school compares with schools that serve similar students and have similar resources, we have established *Similar School* groups. The following factors are considered in grouping schools: a) grade levels the school serves; b) rates of student poverty and ELLs; and c) the income and property wealth of district residents.

The measure of student poverty is the proportion of children in the school who participate in the free lunch program. Free lunch participation declines in higher grades. Nonetheless, since groups are composed of schools serving similar grades, we believe this is a valid approach.

Q. ***How can I get more information on the school report card and the new higher standards?***

A. You may call the Education Department at (518) 474-7965 or you may also contact us through the Internet at the following address: rptcard@mail.nysed.gov. Copies of the New York State Report Card for all public schools and districts, information on the standards and revised State assessments, and other information can be found on our web site: http:\\www.nysed.gov.

The State Testing Program

Regents Examinations

Regents examinations are achievement tests based on courses of study used in grades 9-12. They provide schools with a basis for evaluating the quality of instruction and learning and give students information with which to make educational and vocational decisions. A score of 65 is required to pass a Regents examination; a score of 85 or higher is considered passing with distinction.

For all Regents examinations, the report card shows three years of results for all students. In addition, the *Overview* shows the progress of students who first entered grade 9 in 1996-97 in passing the Regents English and mathematics examinations. General education students in this group must score 65 (55 at local discretion) or higher on the Regents English examination to earn a local diploma. This is the first time the State has reported performance based on date of entry to grade 9.

Other Measures

- ***Attendance Rate*** – *The average daily attendance divided by the possible daily attendance. Absence from school is not permissible without reasonable explanation and cause. Schools with higher attendance rates tend to perform better on State tests.*
- ***Suspension Rate*** – *The temporary exclusion of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a full school day or longer.*
- ***Dropout Rate*** – A dropout is any student who left school before graduation for any reason except death and did not enter another school or high school equivalency preparation program.

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender, genetic predisposition or carrier status or sexual orientation in its educational programs, services and activities. Portions of this publication can be made available in a variety of formats, including braille, large print or audio tape, upon request. Inquiries concerning this policy of nondiscrimination should be directed to the Department's Office for Diversity, Ethics, and Access, Room 152, Education Building, Albany, N.Y.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE